United Nations CEDAW/C/GUY/2

# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
24 September 1999

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

## Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

### Second periodic reports of States parties

## Guyana*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

For the initial report submitted by the Government of Guyana, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.63, which was considered by the Committee at its thirteenth session.

00-23440 (E) 080200

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## List of acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| BERMINE | Berbice Mining Enterprise |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CHW | Community Health Worker |
| ERP | Economic Recovery Programme |
| GEC | Guyana Electricity Corporation |
| GNEC | Guyana National Engineering Corporation |
| GOG | Government of Guyana |
| GRPA | Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association |
| GUYSUCO | Guyana Sugar Corporation |
| IICA | Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| LINMINE | Linden Mining Enterprise |
| MCH | Maternal and Child Health |
| MTPA | Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act |
| NCERD | National Centre for Education Resource Development |
| NCW | National Commission on Women |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NIS | National Insurance Scheme |
| PAHO | Pan-American Health Organization |
| SIMAP | Social Impact Amelioration Programme |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WAB | Women's Affairs Bureau |

## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF GUYANA

Guyana is located on the north-eastern coast of South America and is bordered by Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname. It has an area of 83,000 square miles and a population of 775,100 (mid 1997). Economically, the country's most important region is the 270 mile long and 10-40 mile wide coastal plain which, while only 5 percent of the land area, produces 80 percent of the GDP and contains 90 percent of the population. The rich alluvial soil of the coast, in which is grown rice and sugar, has made it the country's agricultural centre. Much of the coastal region is however, below high-tide sea level and has to be protected against flooding by an elaborate system of dams, walls and groynes. Additionally, the entire region is criss-crossed with canals and sluices for drainage and irrigation.

Despite being well endowed with natural resources - fertile land, extensive forestry and mineral resources, plus a literate, well-educated, though small population, real GDP growth averaged only 0.4 percent per year between 1966 and 1989, the lowest in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Guyana's per capita income has grown by 179 percent between 1992 and 1997, to US$808, compared to an average of US$720 between 1970 and 1980. In fact, at $290 per capita in 1991, income had fallen below that of Haiti, and Guyana became the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

The immediate causes of this retrogression range from persistent balance of payments disequilibria, occasioned by a failure to adjust the exchange parity of the domestic currency in a timely and appropriate manner, to fiscal indiscipline including excessive domestic credit expansion in the face of falling revenues and growing expenditure, excessive government regulation and control of economic decisions, sub-optimal public sector pricing, over-ambitious public investment projects and the marginalisation of the private sector.

The more fundamental cause, however, was the lack of good governance. As a consequence, the disequilibria in the economy tended to manifest themselves in all areas, including but not limited to, the emergence and growth of the parallel or underground economy; a demoralised workforce, rapid emigration of skills, uncompetitiveness of exports; distorted prices for tradeables and non-tradeables; and other disincentives to investment, savings and growth. The external debt of $1.9 billion in 1992, while not very large in absolute terms, became unmanageable because it was among the highest in the world at over $3,000 per capita. Debt service as a percent of Government Revenues reached a high of 249 percent in 1991 and accounted for 107 percent of exports in 1989 and arrears of external debt service had built up to in excess of US$1 billion.

The on-going Economic Recovery Programme was launched in mid-1988, and created a fundamental shift in economic policies towards a market-driven economy. The primary objectives of the ERP were to: restore the basis for sustainable economic growth and a

viable balance of payments position over the medium-term; reintegrate the parallel economy into the official sector; and normalise relations with external creditors. To achieve these objectives the Government began to implement a series of adjustment measures and structural reforms in the areas of incentive policies, fiscal and monetary policies, public sector reform, and sectoral policies:

- price controls were removed, except for domestic sugar;
- import prohibitions and restrictions were eliminated, except for some food stuff;
- the structure of external tariffs was simplified with the introduction of the CARICOM Common External Tariff;
- a free cambio market for the sale of foreign exchange was established in 1990, and the "official" and "cambio" rates have subsequently been unified;
- tax reform measures were put in place and a number of exemptions were eliminated to improve the efficiency of the tax system and increase revenues;
- public sector expenditures were controlled, and discal deficits were reduced considerably;
- a shift to market-based instruments of monetary control was initiated, including a flexible interest rate policy based on competitive treasury bill auctions;
- a process to rationalise the public administration was initiated, including a reduction in the number of ministries from 18 to 11 and of non-critical positions;
- a privatisation program was initiated for a large group of public enterprises, with a large number of them sold, closed or leased;
- rationalisation and restructuring towards privatisation of the operations in the bauxite and sugar sectors begun; and
- a social impact amelioration programme was launched to mitigate the social impact of the adjustment process.

Rescheduling under the aegis of the Paris Club, reduced the immediate debt service obligation, but by capitalising interest payments, increased the stock of debt significantly, to $2.101 billion in 1995. It is not surprising that the economic and political deterioration of the country as a whole saw the poor and marginalised paying the heaviest price. As real per capita GDP declined steadily (29% between 1980-1990) the plight of the poor worsened. A 1993 Household Income and Expenditure Survey/Living Standards Measurement Survey (HIES/LSMS), the first comprehensive survey conducted in twenty years found that a minimum basket of basic foods providing a daily intake of 2400 calories, costs an average of G$35,150 (US$281) at the time of the survey. Households with a per capita expenditure less than this figure were considered to be in extreme poverty, and one-third of the population of Guyana is now estimated to be living under such conditions.

Making adjustments for additional minimal non-food expenditure at this minimum calorie intake gave a figure of G$47,500 (US$380) per capita per annum for an absolute poverty line. The national minimum wage at this time was US$32 (G$4,314) per month. The HIES Survey estimated that in 1993 some 43% of the population of Guyana was below the poverty line, while the corresponding percentage of Guyanese below the poverty line in 1980 was 26%. Thus the numbers of Guyanese below the poverty line increased by more than 65% between 1980 and 1990, even as the total population fell over the period from 800,000 to 730,000.

79% of interior community households are below the poverty line, followed by 45% of rural coastal households where 56% of the population live; and 29% of households in the capital Georgetown which accounts for 21% of the population. 28% of all Guyanese households are headed by women with the percentage rising to 43 in urban areas. While the HIES/LSMS reported only slightly higher incidence of poverty among female-headed households, local income is significantly higher for male-headed households while female heads receive on average 50% more in remittances from abroad (usually close family) which account for an average one-third of total household income.

In April 1992 the World bank issued its first report on the economy in six years, entitled "Guyana from Economic Recovery to Sustained Growth." Among the data presented to support this optimistic title, the Bank noted that with more of the ERP reforms in place, the economy in 1991 was estimated to have grown by about 6% in real terms after a decline of 3% yearly during the previous decade. In fact GDP rose by a further 7.7% in 1992, 8.3 percent in 1993, 8.5 percent in 1994, 5.1 percent in 1996, 6.3 percent in 1997 and is programmed at 3.5 percent in 1998.

These growth rates are among the highest in Latin America. The report, however, went on to cite rough IDB estimates that in 1989 67% of the population were under the poverty line, as well as official calculations that put the figure closer to 86%. It also concludes that "the large increases in basic food prices occurring in 1990 have widened the gap between the earning of the poor and the cost of a minimum food basket and very probably increased the number in poverty."

Two years into the ERP national budget expenditure on education in 1990 had fallen to 2.6% in comparison with 20.9% in Barbados and 10.9% in Trinidad and Tobago. The WB estimates that the declining percentage of public resources directed to social sectors continued under the ERP into the nineties, falling from 10% of GDP in 1986 to 5% in 1992, rising slightly to 6.8 percent in 1997. The process leading to the establishing of a floating exchange rate for the Guyana dollar led to the fall in its value from G$10 for one US dollar to G$33 in mid 1988 to G$111 to the US$143 at end 1997, while annual inflation rates moved from 28% in 1987 to 102% in 1991 and was 4.1 percent at end of 1997.

By 1992 the Bank estimated that wages in the Central Government remained between one-third and one-quarter those of the private sector. Despite efforts which have increased real public sector wage rates to about US$75 per month, the differential with the private sector rates has been largely maintained and women predominate in the public sector jobs, comprising over 90 percent of the non-management workers even today..

The WB noted that in comparison with other structural adjustment programmes where "it is understandable that wages would fall in the early stages of an adjustment programme, the adjustments in the public sector (in Guyana) have been excessive." Even while real wages in the Central Government declined by some 19% between 1988 and 1991 the number of employees in government service fell by 27% from 24,391 to 17,800. In 1991, salaries of the highest paid civil servants in the Guyana Government, Permanent Secretaries, had been eroded by devaluation to be worth, allowances included, only US$370 per month. At the other end of the scale, the WB report conceded that by the beginning of 1992 "many lower level staff were not receiving sufficient remuneration to cover commutation and food costs of going to work." The little data that is available indicate a continued increase in poverty from 1980 to 1992 with a slight improvement by 1998.

Annual increases in revenue of more than 20% have enabled the Government to implement salary increases to its employees which have exceeded inflation rates and also allowed very significant increases in expenditure in the social sectors. Expenditure on education and health in 1994 rose by 33% and 28% respectively and now comprise the highest individual shares of current public expenditure at 17% and 14%. Investment in these sectors continues to be the preserve of specific Donors, however, and the current expenditure programmes do not benefit significantly from direct funding or technical assistance to supplement the severe skills shortage and continuing disequilibrium of the labour market. The situation of the vulnerable groups in the society remains untenable. Although G$500 mn was approved in the 1995 for additional poverty alleviation programmes to be administered directly by Ministries, in so far as there are no good measures of the extent of the problem and hence indications of the size of the solution, no comprehensive programme of action has yet been made, and efforts continue to be ad hoc. As a result only 50% of the allocation was expended.

The human picture five years after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Policies continues to be grim: At best, 10 percent of the population have access to safe drinking water. While in the early 60's it could boast of secondary educational standards second only to Barbados in the CARICOM area, Guyana has now slipped to the lowest in the Region. Functional literacy among persons under age 25 is below the national average with the result that literacy levels over the period have fallen from 98% to under 95%.

The UNDP Development Report estimated life expectancy in Guyana in 1992 at 64.9, the lowest in the Caribbean with the exception of Haiti and the lowest on the continent with the

exception of Bolivia. UNICEF's "State of the World's Children 1993" records that Guyana Under 5 Mortality rate of 69 per thousand is the highest in the Region (cf. Suriname 37, Trinidad and Tobago 23 and Jamaica 19). Between 1984-94, recorded cases of gastroenteritis doubled, typhoid fever tripled and cases of malaria increased twelve fold, directly reflecting a general breakdown of basic services, especially of potable water delivery, adequate sanitation and waste removal. PAHO estimates that in 1990 of the 10 major causes of all deaths in Guyana 5 were due to nutrition/diet related diseases while protein calorie malnutrition was the second leading cause of death among children 1-4 years of age.

The foregoing has to be considered a testimony to the overall ineffectiveness of the social safety net programmes, despite the best efforts of both government and Donors. The sustainability of the programme effects are low, and the recognition of the high cost of logistics and poorly paid public sector employees has not been effectively incorporated into the programmes to date.

The very low budget allocation of US$3.5 mn (G$500 mn) to poverty reduction in 1995 and US$1 mn (G$150 million) has an explanation in the debt service cost which undermines all efforts to increase expenditure and to seriously address the poverty crisis. After three sets of rescheduling arrangements with the Paris Club in `89, `90 and `93 and some marginal write-offs of bilateral debt, Guyana's total external debt only marginally decreased from US$2,061 mn in 1993 to US$2,004 mn in 1994 and up again to US$2,058 mn at the end of 1995, while debt service payments rose to US$104.8 mn, a 18% increase on 1993 levels. Debt service as a percentage of Current Revenue fell from 80.5% in 1992 to 49.7% in 1993 and 42.7% in 1994 but rose again to 50.3% in 1995. Even with no new borrowing the Government estimates the ratio of its loan portfolio to GDP at over 400%. Some 46% of Guyana Debt is owed to the multilateral agencies including 10.4% to the IDA/IBRD and 8.4% to the IMF; another 46% to bilateral creditors including 9% to the UK and a huge 25% to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago; and the relatively small remaining 8% to other mainly commercial bank creditors. Political leaders have argued consistently that the only way for countries like Guyana to escape from the cycle of poverty and debt is through debt write off in which the Multilateral Agencies need to play their part.

The publication of the detailed findings of the comprehensive HIES/LSMS survey already cited and the new emphasis on poverty alleviation has stimulated the issuing by the WB in May 1994 of its "Guyana: Strategies for Reducing Poverty" which directly addresses the contradiction between impressive GDP growth rates and disturbing increases in poverty levels, and attempts to move, beyond rhetoric of community participation and NGO involvement, to specific recommendations for Government and Donor cooperation with these groups especially in programmes to directly redress poverty levels.

# ARTICLE 1

## DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

1. The Government of Guyana continues to be committed to ensuring that appropriate legislative and other mechanisms are in place for the full and equal participation of women in the society. The Guyana Constitution of 1980 embodies the principle of equality and non-discriminatory practices towards women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Article 29(1) states that "women and men have equal rights and the same legal status in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of their sex are illegal."

1.1 The inclusion of Article 29(1) in the Constitution exemplifies a recognition by the Government of the importance of gender equality. This provision, however, is not a fundamental right that can be enforced in court. It is merely a guiding principle for Government's policies and programmes. The 1980 Constitution which is at present under review needs to be amended to reflect a recognition that gender equality is a fundamental right. Guyana's Constitution conforms only in spirit to CEDAW on this issue. Additionally, there is need for the language of the Constitution to be gender neutral. The Constitution should also recognise unwaged work and have a more definitive statement on women in decision making indicating a ratio of 60:40 as a goal to achieved. These issues require legislative support to be translated into real equality for women.

1.2 In keeping with the international recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms of each person, Guyana's Constitution of 1980 underscores the fundamental rights and freedoms of any individual without regard to race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, that are subject only to a respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest. (Article 40(1)).

1.3 Recent legislative reform in the Equal Rights Act of 1990 and the Prevention of Discrimination Act of 1997 represent parliamentary recognition of the need to put in place the legislative framework to give effect to the Convention on the issue of discrimination. While the Equal Rights Act provides for the illegality of discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status it is limited to the sphere of employment. The Prevention of Discrimination Act goes further and provides for the illegality of discrimination in employment, training, education, recruitment and membership of professional bodies. The Act now provides that there be

equal remuneration for men and women who perform work of equal value. The provision on employment is specifically applicable to both the public and private sectors. There is to be no discrimination on the ground of pregnancy. There is, however, no provision for non-discrimination on the ground of need for maternity leave. There is no legislation making maternity leave or paternity leave mandatory. Women in the private and informal sectors are still discriminated against on the ground of pregnancy. The termination of employment of pregnant women in these sectors as well as reluctance to recruit them are practices that still persist. Such discriminatory practices are compounded by the absence of trade unions representing many categories of these workers, for example, domestic employees. Economic necessity force some women to consider termination of their pregnancies in order to maintain or obtain employment.

1.4 The Prevention of Discrimination Act also makes sexual harassment illegal as a form of discrimination. Mechanisms for the implementation of these provisions need to be enacted as well as for those of the Equal Rights Act. Both Acts are deficient in this area. They make discrimination a criminal offence but there are no civil remedies, for example, damages and reinstatement, and this must be addressed. The hearings are to be in open court. This is unacceptable and will prove to be a deterrent to victims. In fact, no case has been brought under the Equal Rights Act despite its enactment since 1990. An equal opportunities tribunal needs to be established. It is recognised that the organisations which employ women or in which women are represented women would have to make de facto equality a reality. Though the Prevention of Discrimination Act is a major step, much of what it stipulates is not put into effect. Efforts will have to be made administratively and judicially to ensure its provisions are enforced.

# ARTICLE 2

## POLICY MEASURES

### Article 2(a) (Embodiment of Equality in the Constitution)

2a. The principle of equality has been established at the constitutional level. The 1980 Constitution which is now under review, assures women that their fundamental rights and freedom from discrimination are acknowledged and will be protected. Article 29(2) of the constitution states:

> The exercise of women's rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion, and in social, political and cultural activity, by special labour and health protection measures for women, by providing conditions enabling mothers to work, and by legal protection and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leave and other benefits for mothers and expectant mothers.

The issue of gender equality, however, needs to be regarded as a fundamental right.

2a.1 Constitutional support for equality of men and women in Guyana is supported by some legislative reform to enact the articles of the Convention. These are dealt with in other sections of the report. Additionally, Guyana is signatory to a number of bilateral international agreements, particularly those of the Organisation of American States, CARICOM and the Commonwealth which embody the advancement of women and the realisation of their equality. In its dealings with the Trades Union Movement, the Government of Guyana has adhered to the principle of equality as signatory to International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions.

**Article 2(b) (Prohibition of Discrimination through Legislation)**

2b. Prior to the decade of the 80s, during which significant legal reforms were instituted in favour of women and some existing discriminatory practices were removed, a State Paper on Equality for Women was presented to Parliament in 1976 by the ruling Government. The Government through this paper declared its condemnation of discrimination against women. The State Paper clearly sets out the areas which were to be addressed initially in keeping with the World Plan of Action, Mexico 1975. The State Paper which identified some existing areas of discrimination particularly towards women in the labour force, represented the first serious governmental commitment to redressing the inequities and discrimination inherent in the governing legislation. The State Paper's underlying principle of Equality is encapsulated in Article 29 of the Constitution which establishes gender equality.

2b.1 The Legal machinery to give effect to this article was set in motion in 1981 with the setting up of the Bernard Committee. The task of the Committee which was led by Guyana's first female judge was to recommend amendments to the Laws of Guyana to give effect to Articles 29 and 30 of

single men were accorded rights to property acquired during a relationship of seven years duration or more.

2b.4 The Family Dependants Provision Act of 1990 allows the surviving spouse and dependants of a deceased spouse to benefit financially from the estate of that person who may have disinherited or inadequately provided for surviving family members. The Act also extends the privilege of claiming benefits to persons in common-law relationships.

2b.5 The Prevention of Discrimination Act of 1997 provides for the elimination of discrimination particularly in the areas of employment, training, recruitment and membership of professional bodies. It has served to open up the possibilities for women entering traditional male oriented or dominated fields. It extends the provisions of the Equal Rights Act of 1990 by promoting "equal remuneration to men and women in employment who perform work of equal value." No discrimination shall be tolerated on the grounds of race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, family responsibilities, pregnancy, marital or economic status.

The act provides for:

(1) protection against unlawful discrimination

(2) protection against discrimination in employment

(3) promotion of equal remuneration

(4) protection against discrimination in areas of provision of goods, services and facilities.

Women in private sector employment are also protected by the Act's extension to both public and private sector employment. The National Commission on Women, in its submission to the Constitutional Review Committee, notes that "much discrimination against women takes place in the private sector as distinct from the public sector." One of its proposals is that constitutional provision pertaining to discrimination be made applicable to private persons construed in the legal sense to include corporate persons.

**Article 2(c) (Protection of Women's Legal Rights)**

2c. There are no public tribunals whose mandate is gender specific in relation to their protection of the rights of women generally. The Office of the Ombudsman was established in 1966 to deal with discriminatory and unjust practices. During the period 1994-1997 there were 306 cases brought

before the Ombudsman for resolution, 49 of which involved discriminatory acts against women.

2c.1 Other national tribunals/state boards have been appointed. Women however are not adequately represented in these fora. Appendix 3 shows the gender composition of management boards in 1993 and 1998.

2c.2 There is a Judicial Service Commission, a Teaching Service Commission, a Public Service Commission and Police Service Commission (Appendix 4). These are all public tribunals related to specific public institutions. These Commissions are concerned with appointments, conditions of service, disciplinary and other personnel related matters. The terms of reference of these Commissions, which control the conditions under which women work, may be described as gender-blind not having been tasked with gender specific directives. Without any gender specific mandate these entities deal with cases in accordance with their regulatory framework and not with any particular focus on women's issues.

2c.3 In 1997, Government appointed a Select Committee of Parliament, the Constitutional Review Committee, which was required to make recommendations, based on hearings and submission of memoranda, for amendments to the 1980 Constitution. The National Commission on Women has submitted proposed amendments to the Review Committee. These proposed amendments are to ensure the protection of women against any act of discrimination through the unconstitutionality of discrimination on the basis of one's sex. One of the recommendations is that Guyana's Constitution be amended to "reflect a recognition that such discrimination is a breach of a fundamental right and therefore unconstitutional."

**Article 2(d) (Conformity of Public Authorities and Institutions)**

2d. The formulation of an Inter-Ministry Committee on Gender under the aegis of the Women's Affairs Bureau is one identifiable measure to conform to Article 2(d) of the Convention. The Committee established in 1996 comprises representatives from the following:

Ministry of Public Works and Communications
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Information
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

Ministry of Public Service Management
Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security
Ministry of Education and Cultural Development
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Home Affairs
Ministry of Legal Affairs
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

The Committee's representatives are required to ensure that the programmes of their respective Ministries and agencies conform to a non-discriminatory policy towards women and are gender conscious. Though the Committee has been established its focus needs to be strengthened and greater significance must be attached to its role as a coordinating body on gender related issues. The terms of reference of the Committee are to advise and give relevant information as it relates to Women and Development Programmes, Issues and Policies.

**Article 2(e) (Measures to Eliminate Institutional Discrimination)**

2e. The Government has no measures specifically targetted at private sector organisations or enterprises to deter them from discriminatory practices towards women. As a separate body the Umbrella Private Sector Commission has no written directive or policy on discrimination against women. The Equal Rights Act of 1990 is intended to act as a deterrent to discrimination by any person, organisation or enterprise. Its effectiveness depends on the instituting of its proposed amendments.

**Article 2(f) (Measures to Modify or Abolish Discriminatory Regulations and Practices)**

2f. In spite of the significant legislative reform during the 1990s favouring women, the removal of discriminatory customs and practices towards women is a goal yet unattained. A number of factors militate against de facto gender equality. Gender concerns in Guyana are entrenched in the socialisation practices and the cultural transmission of gender biased beliefs and attitudes from one generation to the next. The education system is facilitatory of these practices with its minimal policy focus on gender issues as reflected

in the curriculum. The streaming of students in the secondary school system follows traditional gender based occupational patterns with female students largely pursuing subjects that will lead them into female oriented fields.

2f.1 In recent years the Women's Affairs Bureau has had programmes to address the question of equality and discrimination targetting the general public. Additionally, the Bureau's consciousness awareness programmes target the recipients of discrimination to develop their self-esteem as well as their knowledge of agencies that can support and give them assistance. The Bureau is supported in its programme action by NGOs.

2f.2 Discriminatory practices and customs towards women and girls in the Guyana society are cross-culturally engendered within the family unit and by social custom and religious practice. Domestic division of labour is largely characterised by male dominance and is evident among all race groups. Traditionally, the Indo-Guyanese community, the largest race group in the society, has had family structures in which male/female roles are quite distinct and male family members held in high esteem. Religious practices still to some extent foster reverence to males in the family unit, particularly the male head of that unit. Though the practice of religion is a constitutionally guaranteed right, some of its normative elements are discriminatory in nature towards women and serve to keep them in subordination to men. There is some retention of the practice of arranged marriages in both the indigenous Amerindian and Indo-Guyanese communities. This practice undermines the provisions of the Convention in relation to the rights of women and girls.

2f.3 Over the years the indigenous Amerindian community has gradually changed its perspective on cultural practices and taboos which impacted negatively on the development of Amerindian women in the past. During the period under review (1990-1998) there have been increasing efforts by the Government to encourage the participation of Amerindian women in regional and local activities. There is an ongoing collaborative effort between Government and NGOs on development related projects which have resulted in some gains for Amerindian women. Amerindian women, who in the past were not very visible in the mainstream of society, are increasingly becoming more confident in assuming non-traditional responsibilities and leadership roles especially at the village level. This can be regarded as an indication of forthcoming changes and improved relations for these women in a traditionally male dominated subculture. The Amerindian Act 29:01 which governs the lifestyle of indigenous peoples in Guyana is currently under review by a select Parliamentary Committee. Some of its provisions have implications for the practice of discrimination against Amerindian women.

2f.4 In order to remove discriminatory customs and practices, measures and programmes must be aimed at the family, the education system and other social institutions and channels. This is an area that needs to be developed with programmes that target the general public. The schools curriculum offers little in relation to family life education.. NCERD has co-ordinated the production of a booklet on Family Life Education which has been placed at 62 (12%) of the 515 Community High, primary and secondary schools nationwide. In 1993 the Ministry of Education collaborated with representatives from NGOs who conducted lectures in schools on topics in the booklet.

### Article 2(g) (Penal Provisions)

2g. As regards the penal system, a distinction has to be made between provision for detention in police custody as against that of custody in a prison. While there may be little or no discrimination in the latter, in the former the issue of the detention of women who are remanded by the court pending trial or sentence is one of concern. The police station at which remand women prisoners are kept temporarily is not a prison within the law. The women are therefore not accorded certain procedures which obtain in the prison system for males. To illustrate, women should not be returned to the custody of the police after being remanded. To illustrate, women should not be returned to the custody of the police after being remanded. Further, because the female prison is some 75 miles away from the courts in which most female offenders appear and transportation can be a problem some prisoners do not get to court on time or at all. The police are in charge of providing transportation and not the prison authorities.

# ARTICLE 3

## MEASURES TO ENSURE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

3. The appointment of a Minister of Human Services and Social Security with responsibility for Women's Affairs is one measure to ensure the advancement of women. Members of the Inter-Ministry Committee on Gender are intended to act as focal points within the other Ministries. The Minister works in close collaboration with the Women's Affairs Bureau, which was specifically established as a governmental agency tasked with the responsibility of coordinating national efforts to eliminate discrimination

against women and ensuring the full participation and advancement of women in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the society. Its more recent accomplishments since 1996 in advancing the cause and status of women include:

- The conduct of activities related to poverty alleviation programmes throughout the country.
- Approval of the National Policy on Women by Parliament paving the way for the establishment of the National Commission on Women and the Inter-Ministry Committee
- Training sessions in the areas of Training of Trainers, Small Business Training, Consciousness Awareness, Gender Training for Managers and Executives, Computer Literacy Training, Gender and Poverty, Political Leadership for Women.
- Support for the Domestic Violence Bill which was enacted by Parliament (WAB: 1997)

The Bureau needs to adopt as its primary function policy and programme formulation in an effort to establish mainstreaming of the issue of gender. The Bureau therefore requires further institutional strengthening not merely in terms of staff numbers but in its capacity for policy and programme formulation across all sectors of Government. A higher position within the organisational structure is also essential.

3.1 A firm and definitive stand on eradicating inequities in gender relations was taken by the Government in 1996. A National Policy Paper on women was approved by Parliament. Based on its direction, the National Commission on Women was appointed by the Executive President of Guyana. The National Policy Paper on Women identified the following broad principles on which the Government's policy on women is based:

- That women's rights are human rights and they include equitable access in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres.
- That women need to be able to live and grow as full and equal human beings who have value both as persons in themselves and as mothers, workers, organisers and community managers.
- That equality between women and men must begin in the home, and that household democracy and the sharing of parenting and domestic responsibilities must therefore be promoted.
- That children are not solely a family, but also a social and community responsibility.

- That all forms of violence against women are unacceptable.
- That women's capacity to fully contribute to and benefit from economic, social, political and cultural development requires the equal and complementary partnership of women and men in all areas of personal and national life.
- That there is urgent and continuing need to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women from the society.

The Women's Affairs Bureau, the Inter-Ministry Committee and the National Commission on Women are the key entities in the implementation of the following goals for the advancement of women:

- Equality of women in law, in keeping with Government's undertakings as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other relevant institutions.
- The transformation of cultural attitudes, customs and practices that discriminate against women.
- Broad societal acceptance of child rearing and the other unwaged care of family and dependants as responsibilities to be equitably shared by men and women, with the active support of the State.
- The availability throughout Guyana of water, sanitation, health, public safety, transportation and other basic services to support women in their multiple roles.
- Equitable access by women to productive resources and economic opportunity; and equal pay for work of equal value.
- The recognition and valuing of women's unwaged work in the household and community, in subsistence agriculture and family businesses and in preserving the environment.
- Women's access to reproductive health, which requires not simply the provision of facilities but the building of healthy male/female relations.
- Equality of educational opportunity across class, race, culture, region, abilities/disabilities and gender, with particular attention to the needs of girls whose education is interrupted by pregnancy or for any other reason.
- Attention will also be given to both girls and boys having opportunity for training in non-traditional areas of study.
- The elimination of all forms of violence against women, in keeping with Government's obligations as a signatory to the Inter-American Convention on Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.
- Women's realisation of self worth.

The translation of these goals into *de facto* equality for women now requires tangible effective measures backed by the political will to implement and enforce them.

3.2 The Government's continued commitment to promoting the welfare of women in all spheres, and ensuring the equal status of women is underscored in its establishment of a National Commission on Women in 1996.

The Commission's primary responsibilities are:

(1) to act in an advisory capacity to the Minister responsible for Women's Affairs

(2) to advocate on and monitor Guyana's conformity to "the standards, principles and goals embodied in the CEDAW and other relevant UN instruments and in National Development Plans."

(3) to advocate and promote national debate and action on issues related to the advancement of women and girls in Guyana.

The Commission comprises a body of ten (10) women involved in and committed to the development of women. The Commission recently (1997) submitted to the Constitutional Review Committee a proposal for amendments to be made to the Constitution to ensure that its provisions guarantee women gender equality.

3.3 A new strategy initiated by the Government that, when fully implemented, will undoubtedly advance the situation of women in Guyana is the mainstreaming of gender into the National Development Strategy . The National Development Strategy, which is now in draft, is a five year multi-sectoral development plan for the nation. The genderising of the National Development Strategy will be a favourable step in the direction of reducing the marginalisation of gender concerns in policy making.

3.4 A 5-year Plan of Action for Women 1999-2003 has been developed by officials of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security in consultation with NGOs. Key implementers will be the Women's Affairs Bureau, the Women's Leadership Institute and the Resource and Documentation Centre on Funding from the Government of Guyana and international donor agencies.

3.5 In its efforts to promote the development of women the Government of Guyana recognises the need for extending its collaboration with Non-government Organisations (NGOs). NGOs are invited to give positive

support to Government's initiatives on women, to make an input into gender based policy making as well as to assume responsibility for implementation of policies. The Budget of the Women's Affairs Bureau provides for some financial assistance to recognised NGWOs in the conduct of programmes.

3.6 The Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP) was introduced in 1989 to cushion the harsh negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on vulnerable population groups. Specific efforts were directed towards the female population and women's organisations were targetted as key agencies in measures aimed at promoting "adjustment" with a human face. Projects related to health and nutrition targetted mainly women of child bearing age 15-44 and malnourished children aged 2-5 years.

3.7 A new Government sponsored initiative was introduced in 1995 designated "The Poverty Alleviation Programme." As in other developing countries, women are the larger number of the poor in Guyana. In recognition of this fact, funds were allocated for specifically identified measures to alleviate poverty experienced by women. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, which has responsibility for Women's Affairs, is the implementing agency for this component of the national programme. Based on a broad interpretation of the condition of poverty, programmes for skills training and consciousness raising were organised for women across the country. Some emphasis was placed on developing enterprise and entrepreneurial skills among women. Funds were made available to NGWOs.

3.8 In 1997, the Government launched a Women's Leadership Institute. This is a practical policy measure of the Government to empower women and for their full development and participation as women leaders in a range of fields, for example, local government and community development, environmental issues and business. The main purpose of the Institute is to train women for leadership in business, local government, community development and environmental issues and generally to impart skills and information for life. The Institute whose establishment was funded by Government/UNDP is headed by a Co-ordinator. It targets any woman with an interest in acquiring leadership skills. The Institute has facilities for residential training, livestock rearing as well as facilities for child care. It is envisaged that the Caribbean region will eventually become participants in the Institute's programme.

3.9 As has been stated previously, legal reform has been the main thrust of the national response to the Convention. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing there has been an intensified and increased awareness

of women's rights among various NGOs and other groups and the wider society. This contributed to a large extent to the momentum for legislative reform on issues affecting women. Two recent pieces of legislation have facilitated women's development by giving them greater autonomy in the enjoyment of certain basic human rights. These pieces of legislation are the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1995 and the Domestic Violence Act of 1996. These two Acts have engendered wide and vigorous national debate. The Government was firm in its commitment in passing the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act in spite of severe opposition and criticism particularly from religious interest groups in the society. The reproductive rights of women are pivotal to their development and the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act offer women safe options as they make life-directing decisions that may affect their future development. The Act legalises abortion under certain circumstances and seeks to reduce the risk to women arising from illegal unmonitored abortions which were very prevalent. The Act makes provision for pre and post-abortion counselling for the patient and her partner. This aspect of the Act is reportedly not being adhered to as expected. The Advisory Board which is provided for in the MTPA, 1995 and which is to monitor the implementation and compliance with the Act is not functioning.

3.10 There is a need for regulations under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 so that its implementation is more uniform in the judicial system. There is no proper provision for counselling if ordered by the court. The relevant social workers are yet to be designated to institute actions on behalf of victims. Both at the level of the magistracy and the police there is need for more gender sensitivity training.

3.11 Funding assistance has been provided by Government to support the establishment of Institutions for victims of domestic violence, namely, The Genesis Home and the Legal Aid Centre. These Institutions are managed by NGOs.

Government has established and funds the Mahaica Children's Home.

# ARTICLE 4

## TEMPORARY SPECIAL MEASURES TO ACCELERATE DE FACTO EQUALITY

4. The translation of gender oriented policy and legislation into de facto equality for women often requires the adoption of temporary special measures whose impact can be felt directly and immediately. The Government embraces the gender approach, recognising the complementarity of female and male roles and responsibilities.

4.1 Temporary special measures which can be interpreted as affirmative action are manifest largely through the work programme of the Women's Affairs Bureau. Women are targetted specifically for training programmes to develop skills that make them more marketable and able to compete in the job market. Through the Poverty Alleviation Programme, the emphasis on women serves to reduce women's greater vulnerability to the effects of economic crisis and hardship.

4.2 Government ensures the reproductive rights of women are accorded them through protection of maternity. Women who are in paid employment or whose husbands are, do not suffer loss of benefits as a result of pregnancy Through Social Security programmes, mainly the National Insurance Scheme and other group medical schemes provided by employers, women are able to proceed on maternity leave with pay. Changes to the Maternity Benefit Regulations of the NIS during the period under review in this report include amendment of the regulations in 1991 to allow for the payment of the Maternity Grant with respect to each child delivered. Additionally, an uninsured woman who became pregnant outside of Guyana is now allowed to receive Maternity Benefit. In 1997 the Maternity Grant was increased from G$300 to G$2000. The NIS only applies to those who contribute or those employees whose employers have not defaulted in paying the contributions. This affects a lot of women whose employers do not make the necessary contributions for them. In this instance, for example, they would not be entitled to maternity benefits.

4.3 The Prevention of Discrimination Act of 1997 prohibits anyone from discriminating against a woman on the grounds of pregnancy.

4.4 There is no adequate system of child care to assist women in the workforce whether as self-employed persons or as employees. Early childhood care programmes targetting children from birth to age 3 years nine months are

conducted mainly through local municipalities and private entities. There are 9 such day care centres in the country run by the municipalities in Regions 4, 6, and 10. The child care programmes run by the municipalities meet the needs particularly of lower income families. Privately run child care programmes are thriving because of a desperate need by mothers for such a facility. Concerns exist about the conformity of these entities to principles of childhood development and care. There is a recognised need for legislation pertaining to early child care and a standardisation of the programmes and facilities. In 1997, through funding from UNICEF, a Committee for Legislation on Early Childhood Care and Development was established to develop policies and programmes and examine legislation pertaining to early child care. The Committee comprises representatives from Government and other NGOs. The National Commission on the Rights of the Child, established by Government in 1993. While not directly addressing the status of women, this Commission is expected to provide assistance and support through measures and mechanisms addressing child welfare and therefore having some positive impact on women's status

# ARTICLE 5

## SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE

### Article 5(a) (Measures to Modify Prejudicial Patterns of Conduct)

5a. There still exists in Guyana strongly entrenched views and attitudes held by both sexes about a woman's role in and her status as a member of society. Article 5a of the Convention requires that measures be taken to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women" which are premised on beliefs about the superiority of one sex and stereotypical perceptions of both sexes.

5a.1 There is a persistence of the widely held view that males are the superior sex and that ideally a woman's place should be in the home. A significant proportion, 29% of households now are female headed. Women are increasingly taking on the challenge and burden of economic responsibility for their families. Nonetheless, they are still largely perceived as existing in a relationship of inferiority to men. Similarly, women and girls still largely

pursue traditional gender biased occupational roles, themselves contributing to a perpetuation of gender stereotypes. The teaching profession in Guyana remains dominated by women who are 7,577 in number compared to only 1,920 male teachers. The practice of gender stereotyping in education is still very evident. The pattern of enrollment at the University of Guyana illustrates this with female students largely pursuing fields of study that are traditionally considered female dominated. For the 1992 to 1997 academic years females were over-represented in the Social Sciences Faculty and highly under-represented in the Faculty of Technology (Appendix 5). This gender-stereotyping in education often relegates women to the low-income job sector and does little for poverty reduction among women.

5a.2 There is still some element of exclusion of women from the hierarchy of some religious bodies. For the Guyana Council of Churches, an umbrella religious body, there should be no impediments to women functioning at any level within its churches. The Council's spoken and written policy is that women should be allowed to be part of the hierarchy of religious institutions. In practice though, some denominations do not give effect to this policy and women are excluded from functioning beyond a certain level. Even though women account for the vast majority of the church membership, men largely occupy the senior positions in the various religious bodies.

5a.3 Small steps have been taken in the removal of cultural taboos which hinder the development of women. Through education and the education system there has been some attempt to change the culturally dictated expectations and behaviours towards women. The introduction of co-education throughout the school system produces young men and women who co-exist and interact and are expected to treat each other as equals. This is however offset by the streaming of students into traditional male and female dominated careers.

5a.4 In the NGO community, the Rotary Club of Georgetown has amended its rules, now permitting women to become members even though the women must still become members by invitation. In the Lions organisation the designation "Lioness" has become obsolete with clubs now comprise both men and women.

5a.5 One measure for the removal of prejudices about women's ability to perform equally as well as men is the preparation of women for public office through education. From available statistics (see Appendix 5) it can be concluded that women are as well prepared academically and vocationally as men to meet the challenges of access to power and decision-making. In addition, women have traditionally been very active politically as organisers and

motivators of political action. They are still nonetheless not assuming positions of leadership in the hierarchy of political parties.

5a.6 The unacceptable practice of violence being committed against women in the domestic arena is one manifestation of some men's perception of their partners as their property to be treated with little regard. A large number of men, law enforcers and even women believe that domestic violence is in the personal domain and should not require State intervention. Abusive males tend to feel that their ability to physically violate these women is a measure of their masculinity.

5a.7 Women in Guyana are subject to all forms of violence: physical, sexual and psychological. Women from all socio-economic strata of the society are victims. This is not solely the plight of the poor and uneducated. Refuge for the victims of domestic violence is not widely available. The services of the Help and Shelter organisation, founded in 1995, provide relief to victims by offering them advice, support and counselling. During the period 1995-1997, there were 676 clients, 600 of whom were female victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. A Legal Aid Centre has been established through a Government/NGO initiative. It functions to offset the financial burden of legal fees that women face in the resolution of their domestic and other legal battles. Another recent initiative was launched in the form of an organisation, "Men Against Violence Against Women." In addition, 3000 plus male signatories supported the campaign of the Guyana Human Rights Association by signing a pledge to eradicate violence and to develop consciousness and awareness particularly within the male community about the abuse of women.

5a.8 The passing of the Domestic Violence Act in 1996 is a definite step by the Government to eliminate domestic violence. The Act empowers law enforcement officials to give assistance to abused women and provides protection for them. The recognition given to the problem of abuse of women through this piece of legislation is also expected to result in changed attitudes of men towards women. However, education for the victims, enforcers and abusers needs to be emphasised. A booklet was recently launched explaining the Domestic Violence Act. It was produced by Red Thread, an NGO, on funding from the Canada Caricom Gender Equity Fund. The purpose of the booklet is to translate the Act into terms and language that could be easily understood by the general public. The mass media are being used extensively by various organisations to sensitise the public about domestic violence and measures to combat it.

5a.9 Government is a signatory to the Convention of Belem Do Pará.

**Article 5(b) (Promotion of Family Life Education)**

5b. The Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA) is a prime agency in Guyana with a mission to promote responsible sexual behaviour and family life education. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation established in 1973 and is a major facilitator among Government and Non-Governmental Organisations in Guyana that now deal with issues of parenting and counselling for both parents. The GRPA has a Family Life Education Programme which encourages and advocates the teaching of Family Life Education in schools with students as well as Parent Teachers Associations. The organisation reports that currently, approximately 10% of its outreach programmes is geared towards men, counselling them about their role in the family. These programmes are conducted in 5 regions of Guyana.

5b.1 The Maternal and Child Health programme of the Ministry of Health encompasses family planning. This is done in collaboration with the GRPA. Family planning clinics are conducted on a regular basis at a number of the Ministry's health clinics.

5b.2 The Women's Affairs Bureau is involved in the provision of counselling and advice services for women including those with family related problems. It is a referral service.

5b.3 The establishment of a family court is being considered by the Attorney General's Chambers. Another measure currently being discussed is the family code. "The National Commission for the Family was established in October 1998. Comprising 14 persons of professional and technical expertise, its terms of reference include reviewing and monitoring the situation of the Family in Guyana and advising the Minister on appropriate policy and programme formulation and implementation.

# ARTICLE 6

**PROSTITUTION**

6. The exploitative practice of prostitution continues to be an income earner for some Guyanese women. The impoverishment of a large section of the Guyanese population due to severe Structural Adjustment measures has diverted some women to more "lucrative" though unconventional modes of occupation. Economic necessity coupled with unattractive wages in the public sector and some female dominated areas of the private sector have

led some women to opt for the exploitative use of their bodies for economic gain. There is enough evidence of a significant level of prostitution and Government intends to address this due to economic and health concerns. The rural - urban drift is feeding the sex industry.

6.1 The procurers of prostitutes can be prosecuted under the law. The illegal status of prostitution in Guyana is outlined in the Laws of Guyana, Chapter 8:01 of the Criminal Law, Section 73 which states:

> Everyone who:
>
> (a) procures or attempts to procure any female under twenty-one years of age to have any unlawful carnal connection either within or without Guyana, with any other person; or
>
> (b) procures or attempts to procure any female to become, either within or without Guyana, a common prostitute; or
>
> (c) procures or attempts to procure any female to leave Guyana with intent that she may become an inmate of a brothel elsewhere, or
>
> (d) procures or attempts to procure any female to leave her usual place of abode in Guyana with intent that she may, for the purposes of prostitution, become an inmate of a brothel either within or without Guyana
>
> shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and liable to imprisonment for two years.

The penalty of 2 years extends to the prostitute as well. In contrast the penalty for a male prostitute or his client is a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of life imprisonment. This apparent trivialisation of the sexual exploitation of women based on the attendant penalties for those who exploit these women is not in keeping with Article 6 of the CEDAW to suppress prostitution and exploitation of women. Legislation also extends to the keeping of a brothel. According to the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act Chapter 8:02, any person who keeps, manages, acts or assists in the management of a brothel: or who knowingly permits the use of any premises for this purpose by a tenant, lessee, occupier or person in charge shall be liable to a fine of $1000 or 6 months imprisonment on a first conviction. In addition to active law enforcement, legislation is needed to impose much stiffer penalties for the exploitation of prostitutes by others. There is also a need for the enforcement of these provisions.

6.2 Since the last Guyana report (1990) to CEDAW there has been no legislation related to the practice of prostitution. Measures that have been introduced for the overall advancement of women however might have provided a small number of women with alternatives to prostitution by

empowering them through education, skills development and greater earning capacity.

6.3 As stated in the 1990 Guyana report to CEDAW efforts are continuing through Government agencies and NGO's to help women augment their income. This may have an indirect impact on the participation of women in prostitution. The health of persons involved in this activity is not being addressed adequately. Given the size of this problem appropriate measures have to be put in place to monitor the health status and needs of participants and to bring health services closer to them to ensure health safety. Increasing cases of HIV infection make it even more imperative for the Government to ensure that legislation pertaining to prostitution be enforced in a manner that is not discriminatory towards women.

6.4 The Government's Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic and Non-Governmental Organisations have organised and conducted workshops and clinics on sexually transmitted diseases and have had regular testing for high risk individuals. Prostitutes are known to be a high risk group and are targetted in such sessions. The practice of prostitution thus appears to be treated with some amount of tolerance and acceptance. In 1997, the Government embarked on a new initiative, a Programme for Commercial Sex Workers established within the Ministry of Health related to health safety and consciousness within this grouping. Given that the urgent need is generally of an economic nature, the feasibility for the establishment of mechanisms for the organisation of women under this programme could be considered.

6.5 While a significant proportion of prostitution takes place in urban communities, there is a notable trade in women in mining communities in the interior regions of the country. Though prostitutes derive from all race groups, there is particular concern for young Amerindian women and girls in this regard. The advent and promotion of the eco-tourism industry in Guyana, largely located in the interior of the country, create an even greater potential for an expanded market for this kind of prostitution.

# ARTICLE 7

## WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE

7. Women in Guyana continue to enjoy the right accorded them since 1953 with the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.

7.1 Though election to publicly elected bodies is not denied to women they are grossly under-represented at this level. Women share the same rights as men for eligibility for election to publicly elected bodies, councils and committees. Their participation in Governmental and political affairs over the period 1990-1998 however continues to be low. There is a greater tendency for women in Guyana to be involved politically in campaigning activities than in political leadership.

7.2 Though there has been improvement in women's representation at some levels of senior public office in 1993 and 1998, their numbers are still unacceptably low. (Appendix 6) At the level of Permanent Secretary there is a significant decrease in female representation from 1993 (33.3%) to 1998 (14.3%). This follows the trend cited above of a lower representation of women in higher Government office compared to previous years. There is on the other hand a positive indication of women overtaking their male counterparts in 1998 at the levels of Deputy Permanent Secretary, Principal Assistant Secretary and Assistant Secretary in the Public Service. Women now account for 52% of all such positions compared to 42% in 1993. At other lower levels of the Public Service women continue to dominate the various occupational categories. Current figures reveal that of a total of 8,266 such positions, women occupy 6,153 or 73%.

7.3 For the first time in the country's political history a woman was elected firstly to the position of Prime Minister in 1996 and subsequently to the highest political office of Executive President of the Republic of Guyana at the last 1997 general elections.

7.4 Women's participation in the formulation of Government policy is evident at the Parliamentary level. Appendix 7 shows the percentage of men and women represented in Parliament over the period 1993 to 1998. There is a slight fluctuation in female representation in this forum between 1993 and 1998, as women continue to be highly under-represented at this level of political participation. Greater efforts are needed to promote acceptance of political decision-making at this level, recognising that female membership in political parties is sufficiently significant.

7.5 The situation is similar for women's participation at the decision-making level of Government. In 1993 women accounted for 13.3% of Ministerial positions in Government, while in 1998, there is a reduction of female Ministers of Government who comprise a mere 10.5% of the current complement of 19 Ministers.

7.6 Women's participation in the judicial affairs of the state has been advanced with the appointment of the first female Chief Justice in Guyana in 1997. In 1994 women represented 2 out of 12 Supreme Court Judges. In 1998, there has been a slight improvement with 3 female and 12 male High Court Judges. (Appendix 8) There are no female Appeal Court Judges and of the 15 Magistrates, 5 are female. There has been an increase in the number of female Magistrates over the last five years, a positive trend in the advancement of the status accorded to women in the higher echelons of the legal system.

7.7 Within the Foreign Service there are currently no female Ambassadors and Consulate Generals. The two existing Charge D'Affairs are however women and there is an equal number of male and female Vice Consuls. The current head of the Foreign Service Office in Guyana is female.

7.8 Women's performance of public functions at the regional and local government levels is another area in which their participation in decision-making is unacceptably low. In this male dominated field of Government administration women have made few inroads. It is noteworthy that Government has recently appointed a female as Governor of the Central Bank of Guyana. Figures for 1997/1998 indicate that there is some similarity between women's representation in local representative bodies and their representation in Parliament and Government. (Appendix 9) In 1998 all Mayors of the 6 townships in Guyana are male. Women have however acceded to the higher level of regional administration. There is 1 female among the 10 Regional Vice-Chairpersons in 1997/98. All of the Regional Chairpersons and Regional Executives Officers of the 10 Administrative Regions in Guyana are males. The proportion of women in the membership of the Regional Democratic Councils is 47 (F) to 138 (M).

7.9 The foregoing figures on women's participation in the political and public life of the country show neither a trend of advancement for women or overall retrogression. Women have advanced and their status improved in some fields while in others it has not. What is common however in all the trends identified is the relative marginalisation of women in decision-making processes and in the occupation of strategic leadership positions. Measures to redress these evident disparities need to consider increasing the level of women's consciousness and awareness of political issues and women's pivotal role in the democratisation process. The Government has recently taken a step in this direction with the introduction of political leadership training through the Women's Leadership Institute and the Women's Affairs Bureau. Additionally, education and training programmes have to be tailored to produce competent men and women equally guided and equipped for political leadership and senior public office.

7.10 Women in Guyana have been actively involved in non-governmental organisations of a public and political nature for many years. However, two organisations were formed in 1953 and 1957, the Women's Progressive Organisation (WPO), the Women's Auxiliary of the People's National Congress (PNC) respectively. The Women's Auxiliary of the PNC is now designated the National Congress of Women (NCW). It was reported that in 1993 there were 65 Non-Governmental Women's Organisations with interests in matters pertaining to women's rights and women's welfare and other issues relating to their development. Outside this grouping of organisations women participate at various levels in Non-Governmental Organisations comprising both sexes, in some cases heading those organisations. There is a growing linkage between the Government and NGOs in promoting the welfare and development of women in Guyana.

7.11 Women's involvement in the military forces of the country particularly at the senior level, is characterised by imbalance and under-representation typical of political and public office. In the Guyana Defence Force, for example, there are now only 13 (7%) women in the Officer Corp of 188 persons. The highest rank ever accorded to a female is that of Lt. Colonel and only one female has ever enjoyed that privilege. Opportunities for advancement of women in the hierarchy of the military are limited.

# ARTICLE 8

## REPRESENTATION

8. There continues to be no deliberate attempt to prevent the advancement of women in this sphere. Guyana's first female Executive President was elected in December 1997. National and international recognition which some Guyanese women have received has in fact contributed to an even greater awareness by sections of the public of the stature and levels achievement of Guyanese women who serve within the international arena. During the period under review, the Executive President of Guyana received the Gandhi Memorial Award. Two other women have respectively been awarded the CARICOM Triennial Award and the UNESCO Aristotle Silver Medal for related services. Another Guyanese woman also received the Director-General of PAHO Award for service as a health professional at the national level. The current Director of Foreign Affairs is a woman.

schools, particularly in the hinterland and interior areas have been opened in this thrust to provide improved and greater access to education at all levels of society.

10.2 During the period under consideration the Ministry of Education remained conscious of the need to offer opportunities for instruction and guidance in career opportunities. Where initiatives of this nature have been pursued, attention has been given to encouraging young women to pursue career paths that are outside of the traditional spheres. In an effort to reduce gender bias, the Ministry of Education made special efforts to attract females in non- traditional areas of crafts and also in the fields of science and technology. Female students from selected schools have benefited from a Revolving Fund which was established by the Ministry of Education. This fund facilitates the acquisition of loans by young women who are in the technical/vocational stream and who require assistance in acquiring basic tools. The effects of these and similar strategies continue to be circumscribed by cultural and attitudinal factors as well as by the many obstacles which women face in the spheres of entrepreneurship and commerce. It is evident that the majority of young women continue to choose traditional female oriented career paths.

10.3 Beyond the secondary level, government continued to finance and maintain institutions which offer Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). Both women and men who live close to the capital city and developing towns continued to enjoy easier access a range of technical and vocational training. Women continue to be attracted to such government institutions as the two urban based Technical Institutes, the Guyana Industrial Training Centre, the Guyana School of Agriculture, and the Carnegie School of Home Economics. Industrial Companies such as GUYSUCO, LINMINE, BERMINE, GEC and GNEC also continue to provide specialised skills training to both male and female staff.

10.4 Partly as a result of the efforts which are made at both governmental and non-governmental levels the larger picture of women's access to education is encouraging. In 1992, 68.7% of females and 68.1 % of males had access to education. Data from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 1992- 1993, showed that women accounted for 50% and men for 48% of the overall literacy rate of 98 % - a situation which obtains for the entire English speaking Caribbean. In 1996 the Ministry of Education welcomed and supported a national literacy programme which is administered by the Baha'is of Guyana in collaboration the University of Guyana's Institute of Distance and Continuing Education(IDCE). The programme aims at boosting the literacy skills of 10-6 year olds and generally at assisting in empowering

both male and female youths and has provided various levels of training to over 600 facilitators and 3000 youth. Another noteworthy initiative is the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute which was launched in December 1997, in recognition of the need to better prepare women in leadership roles at all levels of society.

10.5 Women have made significant gains at the tertiary level where it is indicated that female enrolment is generally higher than that of men. In the technical vocational area the situation is also favourable, although the ratio of men to women was 57:43. At the level of the university, figures show that females represented 55% of the first year students for the year 1995/6. In that year, first year students in technology and agriculture were predominately male with percentages of 86 and 68 respectively. The reverse occurred in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, where females were 77% and 62%, respectively. In the area of teacher training, 84.4 % of the enrolment figure at the Cyril Potter College of Education were women.

10.6 Within recent years government has introduced a special hinterland training programme for teacher training particularly with a view to improving the quality of formal education within the interior where the majority of the indigenous peoples reside. The existing Hinterland Scholarship Programme has expanded to offer financial support to hinterland students at the University of Guyana. Over the years, indigenous students have been the main beneficiaries of this. A special initiative to accommodate a select number of Amerindian students of both sexes at the prestigious secondary school, President's College, is another strategy which has positive implications for the educational advancement of Amerindian women. Efforts made by the University of Guyana to extend its IDCE programme to benefit more rural and interior locations have also provided additional opportunities for a wider cross section of Guyanese women to enhance their educational status.

10.7 One of the gender sensitive initiatives that the Ministry of Education has been making a conscious effort to address is that of removing sex-stereotyping in textbooks. While this continues to prove a challenge, recent

editions of books which have been funded by the Ministry of Education have begun to reflect more positive images of women.

10.8 A Research and Documentation Centre for Gender Development has been established in the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. This Centre is expected to provide information and data for in-depth analysis of the situation of women as a basis for policy and programme formulation.

# ARTICLE 11

## EMPLOYMENT

11. Article 29(1) of the Constitution outlines the general principle that women are to be accorded the same rights as men within the context of equal opportunities for all in every sphere of life. Article 29(2) provides for equality in education, training, employment, promotion and remuneration. In executing its policies and programmes Government is guided by these principles. The Equal Rights Act of 1990 and the Prevention of Discrimination Act of 1997 were enacted to address a number of the issues relating to these principles.

11.1 Of the two recent legal instruments mentioned above, the Prevention of Discriminatory Act 1997 is the more comprehensive. This Act provides for equal pay for work of equal value and therefore conforms with part (d) of this Article. Both the public and private sectors are bound by the legislation in relation to employment. However, there is no legal provision for mandatory maternity leave nor is there any recognition for paternity leave.

11.2 Recent publications maintain that the gender gap in the work force is a critical issue but surveys continue to fail to provide adequate data especially with respect to the extent of women's participation in unwaged labour. Although available data indicate that women's participation in the labour force between 1980 and 1992 rose from 25% to 39%, a national survey around 1992/3 showed that women constituted a mere 26 % of the total labour force.

11.3 The 12 % unemployment rate in 1992 suggests that there is a relatively high level of unemployment in the country. Various reports on Guyana have drawn attention to the facts that rural unemployment was even higher for females, and that the percentage of employed male youth is more than three times that of employed female youth. In seeking to redress this situation the government has encouraged and supported activities which offer opportunities for youth generally. In 1996 Guyana became one of four Commonwealth nations to launch a Youth Credit Initiative. Based on a micro-credit approach and with training and a focus on women as critical components, this pilot programme is now in its second phase. This initiative is being conducted by the Commonwealth Youth Programme in collaboration with the Department of Youth and the Globe Trust and Investment Company Ltd.

11.4 Assessments based on current trends and relevant data emphasise that women's participation in paid labour remains restricted to low-paying jobs, in both the formal and informal sector. In the Public Service the ratio of men to women in 1993 was 5:4 but figures also indicated that men made up 64% of those in the top seven ranks of the scale. Apart from the Public Service, the dominant work areas in the formal sector which attract female labour are teaching and nursing, the public service, the private- domestic service area, the security guard service, the garment sectors and agriculture. Additionally, the country's economic situation has led to an increase in the numbers of women as vendors and traders in the informal sector. Within both the public and private sectors poor remuneration, business risks, job insecurities and lack of adequate union representation, and lack of occupational health and safety protection are factors which continue to impact negatively on women. Women who engage in waged labour are eligible by law to be covered by the National Insurance Act. Under the Termination of Employment and Severance Pay Act, 1997, pregnancy or a reason connected with pregnancy is stipulated as one of the reasons which does not constitute good or sufficient cause for dismissal.

# ARTICLE 12

## HEALTH

12. Article 24 of the Constitution states that every citizen has the right to free medical care. While this is not a fundamental right and despite the financial and other constraints which affect the health sector as a whole, Government health policy generally attempts to incorporate this principle.

12.1 Government has continued to expand and upgrade its health network and facilities across the country. Health care in Guyana is currently being provided by Government, para-statal, private and non-governmental institutions with support from the donor community. The shortage of drugs, shortage of trained personnel and diagnostic services, particularly in rural and interior locations are among the factors which are frequently cited as affecting Government health service.

Budgetary allocations for the health service during the period under review have increased by 56%.

12.2 The Maternal and Child and Health (MCH) programme is one aspect of the national health service which is directly related to giving women support in their reproductive role. The data suggest, however, that inadequacies in this programme contribute to the factors which characterise the health situation of women. For example, in 1996 the life expectancy of women was 69 years compared to 63 years for men, and it was noted that maternal mortality rate was as high as 443 per 100,000 in 1992 in one of Guyana's three major hospitals. In 1993, 32.7 percent of pregnant women attending clinics suffered from anemia. Closely related to all of this are reports that relate to children. In 1995, infant and children mortality (under five) were 32 and 65 respectively. In 1994, still births rate was 23.9 per 1000 births compared with 18.2 per 1000 births. In 1994, 19 percent of total live births were infants with low birth-weight. In 1993 government appointed a National Commission for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. This Commission has developed a National Action Plan for Children the year 2000. The plan aims at decreasing existing mortality by at least one-third, reducing maternal mortality by the same percentage, reducing severe malnutrition by one third and moderate malnutrition by one-half of the prevailing rates. In addition to its financial and administrative management of the Palms, a senior citizens' home, the monthly allowance for old-age pensioners, as well as, that of the National Insurance Scheme have both been increased. Food assistance to senior citizens as members of the Golden Age Clubs is provided by the SIMAP.

12.3 There have been a number of interventions which were aimed at reaching women either directly or indirectly. The ongoing Nutrition Programme is one example. It includes iron and vitamin supplements for pregnant women through the MCH Programme. Under the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and as part of Government's safety net strategy, the Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP) has provided some food supplements for homes through day care centres. The World Food Programme has also provided limited quantities of biscuits and milk for school children.

12.4 Health education and awareness programmes continued mainly through the MCH programme. Among the objectives of these programmes is the provision of health education and nutritional advice, and some family planning education. Work in the last area is considered as generally weak, particularly in interior locations where the majority of indigenous inhabitants live . Efforts by the MCH programme have been complemented in some small but appreciable measure by the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA) and a few non-governmental agencies. Although there has been a general decline in fertility rates(presently 2.6) much concern has been raised at the rapidly increasing rate of teenage pregnancies. Overall

there is an urgent need for implementing a national programme on sexual and reproductive health for all age groups and persons and more effective support for family planing programmes are required. The Georgetown hospital remains the main government health institution which delivers clinical services to commercial sex workers and persons who are afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases. The GRPA also provides some limited service, mainly by way of counseling. It should be noted that in May 1997, the Ministry of Health participated in a workshop on Mainstreaming Gender in the Health Sector which was funded and organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat .

12.5 Government has assisted in the promotion of greater awareness in three important areas of women's health, namely breast feeding, cancer and termination of pregnancy. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1995 was enacted with a view to decriminalise abortions. This Act provides the legal framework for clinically safer options to women desirous of terminating pregnancies and it has been regarded as a means of safeguarding women and girls form unsafe abortions. Mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of this Act, however, are inadequate.

12.6 The training of additional Community Health Workers (CHWs) and the upgrading of skills for this corps of primary health care providers continues to be one aspect of government's drive to enhance the level of health service which are available to hinterland and interior populations. In addition, the Medex training programme was reintroduced in 1997 and the current batch of trainees includes a significant number of Amerindians. Government has also made attempts to improve the services available to persons with disabilities and by way of augmenting the limited services that the state provides for this category of the disadvantaged. Through official government support and in collaboration with the IDCE of the University of Guyana, the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme has raised up a corps of trained volunteers who provide services and support at the grassroots level for the care of the disabled. In some interior locations, CHWs have been trained in this field.

12.7 Government, through the Ministry of Health has also attempted to control the high incidence of malaria. Some initial steps have been taken to arrest the re-emergence of tuberculosis which is more prevalent in interior communities and which impact negatively on the health of women and their families. With respect to the issue of disability, government is currently reviewing a National Policy on Disability. The Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme "Hopeful Steps" which is non-governmental programme is regarded as providing support services in rehabilitation at a time when

disability-related issues and institutions are yet to be accorded priority attention. There is no known discrimination against women although persons with disabilities are generally considered to be among the disadvantaged groups in Guyana.

# ARTICLE 13

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

13. In all spheres, Government policy continues to be guided by principles which seek to promote equality of the sexes. Article 29(2) of the Constitution outlines the general policy that mothers and expectant mothers are to be accorded family benefits.

13.1 The Married Persons Property (Amendment) Act, 1990, provides for the division of property as between spouses. This legislation allows for the court to take a spouse's contribution to the family into account where the union is of less than 5 years duration. The Act, however, is discriminatory in that it makes a distinction between working and not working spouses with the former entitled to ½ share and the latter to 1/3 in the "matrimonial property" where the parties in both instances have lived together for at least 5 years. In this regard the Act diminishes the importance of women's contribution to the welfare of the family and the importance of unwaged work.

13.2 The Family and Dependants Provision Act, 1990 brought significant changes as regards the distribution of property to spouses and children on the death of a family member. It provides for persons who are spouses, children and dependants of the deceased to claim financial provision from the estate where they are either wholly or partly disinherited by the deceased in a will or where the rules of intestacy or both the will and these rules result in reduced or no benefits to them. Persons in common law unions for seven years immediately prior to the death of a partner can also make claims as a spouse.

13.3 Legally women are not denied access to loans, mortgages and credit from formal loan agencies. The demand for high levels of collateral, high interest rates and in some instances requests by lending institutions for biographic and economic data on the spouses of women are limiting factors. The Bank of Nova Scotia, Institute of Private Enterprise Development and are among the lending agencies which offer special arrangements to women. A Revolving Loan Fund which is administered by the Women's Affairs Bureau continues to provide both training and small loans to women.

13.4 While emphasis has been given in some areas to sports, national attention does not favour women in sporting activities. Generally, women's participation in sports and athletics is promoted through the limited physical education curriculum in schools, school based sports activities, organised community events and the activities of sports clubs. Despite the limited involvement of women in organised sports, there is a special category for women in the annual national sports awards.

13.5 Guyanese women have traditionally played a dominant role in cultural activities. In addition to Mashramani, a major national celebration, which presents opportunities for women to engage in various forms of cultural expression, and religious or other conventions not withstanding, women are also encouraged to contribute to and participate in other national, community and cultural art forms. The current Minister of Sports and Culture is a woman.

# ARTICLE 14

## RURAL WOMEN

14. While there is a lack of comparative data, the situation of rural women continues to underscore the fact that it is this category of women who represent the poorest and disadvantaged of all women. A 1996 study estimated that 80 % of rural women are engaged in agriculture and about 20% of households are headed by women. These households tend to have a higher incidence of poverty and rural peoples in Guyana generally tend to have less access to social services. Data from the IICA/IFAD study, 1994 showed that of the numbers of persons surveyed in selected rural areas, 41 % obtained primary education, 43% had secondary education and 0.5 % had university education.

14.1 Government has channeled funding through a number of programmes centred on infrastructure in the areas of education, health and improving facilities for potable water, building bridges and access roads in rural communities. As part of these programmes women's participation at the decision making and grassroots levels has been encouraged partly in a concerted effort to actively involve women in transforming conditions which affect their daily lives. At the local level and across the country, women serve as members of the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils and on Amerindian Village Councils. While at the regional level they serve on the Regional Democratic Councils. These governing bodies are tasked with the

responsibility of fostering community development. In certain sectors of the country, however, and especially among the indigenous communities, there is a recognised need to empower women to play more significant roles at this level of decision making and governance.

14.2 Collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture have provided some support to rural communities. Projects which have been executed in indigenous communities in particular have boosted women's involvement in a range of agriculture production skills and technologies. Similar projects which are currently being implemented with international financial support and non-governmental interventions, and which include capacity building skills, have also begun to provide much needed impetus to indigenous women's development. An IFAD programme, "Poor Rural Communities Support Services Project," which was formulated in 1996 targets two rural regions through credit for farming and small enterprise development. Women, young people and Amerindians are the beneficiaries of this programme. At a time when data suggest that the numbers of female headed households are on the rise among indigenous communities and when male absenteeism is also a factor to be considered, indigenous women have demonstrated much receptivity to projects of this nature. With the setting up of the Rural Women's Network, in December 1998, emphasis will be placed on addressing the problems faced by rural women.

# ARTICLE 15

## LAW

15. In 1980, the principle of equality of women was enshrined in the Constitution but it is regarded as a non-justiciable right. There has been no further change in legislation with respect to Government's compliance with this Article.

15.1 The situation which currently obtains is that both women and men are accorded the same rights and obligations before the law and legislation is gender neutral in application.

15.2 Women have been accorded more definitive property rights vis–a-vis their spouses both while they are alive or on the death of the spouse. This has been made possible through amendments to the Married Persons( Property) Act, Chapter 45:04, by virtue of the Married Person's (Property)(Amendment) Act, 1990, as well as by the enactment of the Family and Dependants Provision Act, 1990.

15.3 Legally , women have always had the ability to enter into contracts and own and administer property and are therefore subject to equal treatment in the courts of law. Although women continue to face a range of other challenges relating to financial and commercial transactions, there have never been any known legal impediments.

15.4 Women have freedom of movement and are free to choose their residence or domicile. Moreover, Guyanese women can also sponsor their husbands as citizens of Guyana. Cultural, societal and traditional norms do in some instances restrict the de jure rights which have been accorded to women Cultural practices and to some extent the existing Amerindian Act 29 :01 which governs the lifestyle of indigenous peoples present a number of difficulties for indigenous women whose spouses are of differing ethnic backgrounds. In some instances non-indigenous spouses are not permitted to live in the woman's home village, thus requiring indigenous women to leave their native villages. In contrast to their women folk, indigenous men in similar situations often face less discriminatory practices. There is no general regulation that directly addresses the issue of preventing attendant forms of discrimination which either men or women are likely to experience in such circumstances. Currently, local governing institutions in respective villages determine the procedure to be applied.

# ARTICLE 16

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

16. There has been no change in the position as regards Guyana's compliance with this Article. However, as regards adoption, recent amendments allow for overseas based Guyanese whether they have retained Guyanese citizenship or not, to adopt children who are resident in Guyana. Common law spouses are also now accorded legal recognition and are equated with legal spouses for the adoption applications. As regards divorce proceeding, division of property, maintenance, custody of children and general rights on divorce and separation, it has been recommended and Government has recognised the need for comprehensive amendment of the law in relation to the family.

16.1 As regards divorce proceedings, division of property, maintenance and custody of children, and general rights on divorce and separation, it has been recommended that these issues be dealt with by the court at the time of the hearing. In the main, the legislative framework is in place for the de jure compliance with this Article. However, cultural, traditional and societal views and prejudices still discriminate against women in relation to property rights and their rights to freely choose an occupation or profession.

## Appendix 1

### Population of Guyana by Sex 1992-1997

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | 364,088 | 374,877 | 736,965 |
| 1993 | 368,032 | 378,927 | 746,949 |
| 1994 | 376,269 | 387,418 | 763,687 |
| 1995 | 381,059 | 392,351 | 773,410 |
| 1996 | 383,147 | 394,501 | 777,648 |
| 1997 | 383,712 | 395,083 | 778,795 |

Source: Statistical Bureau,

## Appendix 2

### Composition of Management Boards by Institution and Sex 1993 and 1998

**1993**

| | M | F | T |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ministry of Finance (Central Tender Board) | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Ministry of Labour Boards | 35 | 16 | 51 |
| GBTI | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| GCMFB | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| GCIS | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| GNEC | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| GBC | 9 | 1 | 10 |
| GEC | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Total | 85 | 24 | 109 |

Source: B. ShiwParsad (1994).

1998

| | M | F | T |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tourism Advisory Board | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Guyana Post Office Corporation | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Guyana Stores Limited | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Adoption Board | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Total | 16 | 15 | 31 |

Source: Office of the President.

Appendix 3

Gender Composition of Service Commissions 1998

| | M | F | T |
|---|---|---|---|
| Police Service Commission | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Public Service Commission | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Teaching Service Commission | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| National Commission on the Rights of the Child Adoption Board | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| Total | 16 | 11 | 27 |

Source: Office of the President.

Appendix 4

Educational Statistics
Enrolment at Nursery, Primary and Secondary Levels
1994,1995

| Year | Nursery | | Primary | | Secondary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 1994-1995 | 14,231 | 13,896 | 45,810 | 41,458 | 25,042 | 26,716 |
| 1995-1996 | 14,752 | 14,554 | 51,020 | 49,232 | 30,798 | 32,567 |

Appendix 5

Enrolment and Graduation of University of Guyana.
Students by Sex 1992-1997

Enrollment

| Year | Social Sciences | | Technology | | Agriculture | | Education | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 1992/93 | 568 | 875 | 332 | 24 | 47 | 24 | 108 | 227 |
| 1993/94 | 761 | 1161 | 372 | 27 | 57 | 33 | 110 | 292 |
| 1994/95 | 591 | 1070 | 293 | 24 | 73 | 43 | 109 | 321 |
| 1995/96 | 577 | 1133 | 301 | 39 | 83 | 33 | 128 | 323 |
| 1996/97 | 584 | 1202 | 316 | 31 | 113 | 47 | 73 | 301 |
| 1997/98 | 641 | 1232 | 332 | 32 | - | - | - | - |

Graduation

| Faculty | 1993/1994 | | 1994/1995 | | 1995/1996 | | 1996/1997 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Agriculture | 9 | 2 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 8 | 21 | 10 |
| Arts | 6 | 19 | 9 | 51 | 32 | 45 | 24 | 34 |
| Education | 14 | 51 | 36 | 114 | 32 | 106 | 34 | 129 |
| Health Sciences | 46 | 52 | 30 | 56 | 28 | 47 | 24 | 37 |
| Natural Sciences | 14 | 15 | 26 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 26 | 40 |
| Social Sciences | 84 | 167 | 177 | 206 | 109 | 169 | 129 | 144 |
| Technology | 104 | 12 | 115 | 8 | 53 | 5 | 98 | 11 |

Appendix 6

Top Government Officials by Sex 1993 and 1998

| Category | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1993 | 1998 | 1993 | 1998 |
| Permanent Secretary | 66.7 | 85.7(6) | 33.3 | 14.3(1) |
| Deputy Permanent Secretary<br>Principal Assistant Secretary<br>Assistant Secretary | 58.0 | 48.0(24) | 42.0 | 52.0(26) |

Appendix 7

Members of Parliament by Sex 1993-1998

| Year | M | F | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1993 | 60 | 12 | 72 |
| 1994 | 59 | 13 | 72 |
| 1996 | 60 | 11 | 71 |
| 1997 | 61 | 12 | 73 |
| 1998 | 63 | 12 | 75 |

Source: Parliament Office.

Members of Parliament by Sex
1980, 1985, 1993, 1997

| Year | Male % | Female % |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 85.7 | 14.3 |
| 1985 | 77.8 | 22.2 |
| 1993 | 88.3 | 16.7 |
| 1997 | 83.5 | 16.5 |

Source: B. ShiwParsad (1994) and Parliament Office.

Appendix 8

Women's Representation at Regional and Local Government Levels 1997

| Regional Democratic Council | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chairperson | | Vice-Chairperson | |
| M | F | M | F |
| 10 | 0 | 9 | 1 |

| Regional Executive Officer | |
|---|---|
| M | F |
| 10 | 0 |

| Neighbourhood Councils | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chairperson | | Vice-Chairperson | |
| M | F | M | F |
| 62 | 3 | 60 | 5 |

| Municipal Level Mayors | |
|---|---|
| M | F |
| 6 | 0 |

| Deputy Mayors | |
|---|---|
| M | F |
| 5 | 1 |

Appendix 9

Members of the Legal Profession (Judges) by Sex 1993 and 1998

| Judges | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1993 | 1998 | 1993 | 1998 |
| Appeal Court | 15 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| High Court | 14 | 10 | 3 | 5 |

Source: B. ShiwParsad and Attorney General Chambers .

## Appendix 10

### List of Acts Amended Based On The Recommendations of the Bernard Committee Established to Recommend Amendments To The Law of Guyana To Give Effect to Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

1. Summary Jurisdiction (Magistrates) Act, Chap. 3:05
2. Defamation Act, Chap. 6:03
3. Criminal Law (Procedure) Act, Chap. 10:01
4. Insolvency Act, Chap. 12:21
5. Defence Act, Chap. 15:01
6. Pensions Act, Chap. 27:02
7. Pensions (President, Parliamentary and Special Offices) Act, Chap. 27:03
8. Public Officers Widows Act, Chap. 27:07
9. Public Officers (Insurance) Act, Chap. 27:10
10. The Municipal and District Councils Act, Chap. 28:01
11. Civil Aviation (Births, Deaths and Missing Persons) Act, Chap. 44:02
12. Marriage Act, Chap. 45:01
13. Maintenance Act, Chap. 45:03
14. Married Persons (Property) Act, Chap. 45:04
15. Infancy Act, Chap. 46:01
16. Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act, Chap. 82:21
17. Exchange Control Act, Chap. 86:01
18. Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, Chap. 99:01

Appendix 11

Statistical Data supporting the Socio Economic Factors including the Status of Women

| | 1980 | | | 1992-1993 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Difference | Male | Female | Difference |
| Economically active | 85.1 | 26.1 | 59.0 | 82.1 | 39.3 | 42.8 |
| Economically inactive | 9.9 | 71.6 | 61.7 | 18.8 | 60.7 | 41.9 |
| Unemployment rate | 15.1 | 22.1 | 7.0 | 8.4 | 18.1 | 9.7 |
| Average yearly income 1991 | $49,732 | | | $42,017 | | |

Source: Bureau of Statistics Guyana

Appendix 12

Employed Persons by Gender and Industrial Groups

| Occupation | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | 56143 | 5702 | 61845 |
| Mining & Quarrying | 13289 | 1098 | 14387 |
| Manufacturing | 24744 | 8376 | 33120 |
| Electricity/Gas/Water | 2755 | 642 | 3397 |
| Construction | 9533 | 225 | 9758 |
| Wholesale/Retail: Trade | 20996 | 11600 | 32596 |
| Hotel/Restaurants | 2366 | 2930 | 5296 |
| Transportation/Storing/Communication | 10314 | 1768 | 12082 |
| Real/Estate | 5415 | 3389 | 8803 |
| Public/Administration/Defence/Social Security | 9354 | 5914 | 15268 |
| Communication Service | 6792 | 12593 | 19385 |
| Other Service | 1873 | 4656 | 6529 |
| Not stated | 211 | 235 | 446 |
| Total | 163,784 | 59,128 | 222,912 |

Source: Bureau of Statistics (98-08-14)